



Chief Tracy Wyant



# UNIFIED POLICE

GREATER SALT LAKE

The following UPD Taylorsville Precinct Awards were presented by Chief Tracy Wyant at the City Council Meeting held on Wednesday, May 17, 2017.



(L-R) Detective Van Leeuwen, Detective Louie Muniz, Detective VanRoosendaal, Officer Watrous

## PRECINCT CHIEF AWARD - MAY 2017

### Detective Louie Muniz

Detective Louie Muniz was assigned to the Taylorsville Precinct Investigations Unit from October 2, 2012, to April 5, 2017. As a veteran police officer, Detective Muniz applied his vast amount of knowledge, expertise, and wisdom to his assigned cases. While many other detectives handled their assigned cases in a very efficient and concise manner, Detective Muniz also emphasized patience and diligence. He effectively filed criminal cases against suspects, recovered significant amounts of stolen property, and comforted victims of criminal acts. While assigned to the Unit, Detective Muniz received numerous compliments from other officers, detectives, and victims regarding his work ethic and positive attitude. Detective Muniz would actively investigate cases that most detectives would consider to be unworkable. Because of his persistence and tenacity, many of these cases were either solved, or the property was located and returned to the owners. One example of such diligence began in December, 2016 when an adult male and female broke into the pastor's car at a local church. Detective Muniz was able to track the suspects to a hotel in Draper where he apprehended two adult males. One of the males was a wanted felon, and the other male was the male who had committed the vehicle burglary. However, the female was not located. As he developed this case further, Detective Muniz learned that the male and female were prolific criminals that had committed numerous crimes throughout the valley. He alerted patrol officers and other law enforcement agencies about the two. After the alert, patrol officers encountered the couple at a residence in Taylorsville. Officers located a significant amount of property that had been stolen during residential burglaries, vehicle burglaries, and thefts. The property was seized and sorted. A press release was made to the media which garnered the attention of numerous crime victims. Victims began calling the Taylorsville Precinct hoping to get their stolen property back. At his request, Detective Muniz fielded all of the incoming calls and was eventually able to return a significant amount of property to the victims. Despite being tedious and time-consuming work, Detective Muniz remained upbeat and helpful. Detective Muniz should be commended for his tenacity, work ethic, and expertise!

## PRECINCT CHIEF AWARD - MAY 2017

### Detective Grayson Van Leeuwen

While conducting a proactive patrol in Taylorsville, Officer Grayson VanLeeuwen witnessed a male checking door handles and looking into vehicles. When Grayson attempted contact with the suspect, the suspect saw him and hurried back to his vehicle. Grayson parked his patrol car behind the suspects vehicle preventing him from leaving. As Grayson gave commands to the suspect to exit the suspect put the vehicle into drive. Grayson approached the vehicle and commanded the suspect to exit. The suspect put the vehicle into park but continued to be verbally aggressive toward Officer VanLeeuwen. The suspect was not responding to commands and began concealing his hands reaching for items in the vehicle. Concerned for his safety, Grayson physically removed the suspect from the vehicle. The suspect began to reach for something in his waistband. Grayson struggled with the suspect as the suspect continued to reach his waistband. Grayson was able to get the suspect into custody by using arrest control techniques. Grayson searched the suspect's waistband, where he was reaching, and found a loaded Glock handgun. The suspect was interviewed and stated he was trying to get Grayson to shoot him. The suspect knew he was going back to prison and wanted suicide by cop. The suspect had numerous felony warrants for his arrest and was charged with numerous felonies including Attempted Aggravated Assault on a Police Officer. The suspect had numerous felony warrants for his arrest and was charged with numerous felonies including Attempted Aggravated Assault on a Police Officer. The suspect was ultimately indicted by a Grand Jury and is now in Federal Custody. Officer VanLeeuwen was thrust into a potentially deadly encounter while conducting routine proactive patrol. Grayson's conduct shows a great amount of restraint in a very dangerous situation. This is a great example of a suspect provoking an officer to shoot them, and instead, the officer (while keeping themselves safe) makes good split second decisions which resulted in the arrest and prosecution of a dangerous felon and preventing loss of life.

## OFFICER OF THE MONTH - MARCH 2017

### Detective Gene VanRoosendaal

On March 22, 2017, Detective Gene VanRoosendaal responded to 4200 S Redwood Rd on a traffic accident investigation. A van occupied by six adults and two children had been rear-ended by an SUV. There were some minor injuries but nothing substantial. Gene learned the occupants of the van were homeless and subsequently living out of their van. The two children in the van appeared shaken up from the accident. Gene walked over to the McDonalds, purchased two happy meals with his own money and gave them to the children. Gene showed the compassionate side of law enforcement that is manifested every day but isn't always marketed. I feel safe in saying that these kids will never forget the kindness Gene showed them. Officer VanRoosendaal is an outstanding example of what being a public servant is truly about. The City of Taylorsville is fortunate to have such an involved, competent and dedicated member serving its residents.

## OFFICER OF THE MONTH - APRIL 2017

### Officer Darin Watrous

On April 22, 2017, Officer Watrous was dealing with a very convoluted case which involved drugs and children being removed from their home. The children were moved to a safe location, and a safety plan was put into place. The mother began sending her kids messages on Facebook saying goodbye. Officer Watrous along with a DCFS worker responded to the home and spoke with the victim. The victim adamantly denied being suicidal and stated she was just telling her kids goodbye because she thought she wasn't going to see them again. The victim was very convincing and promised Officer Watrous she would not harm herself. Officer Watrous took the victim aside, sat down and spoke with her for over 45 minutes. During the conversation, she admitted to Officer Watrous she had taken over 40 benzodiazepine pills just before he arrived. She admitted to Officer Watrous she wanted to die. The victim also gave Officer Watrous a suicide note she had written and his on her person. Had Officer Watrous not taken the extra time to talk to the victim, she would likely have been found deceased the next day. She was taken to the hospital to receive medical and psychiatric treatment. The DCFS worker told Sgt. Rob Scott that "Officer Watrous was an amazing officer." The DCFS worker stated that not all officers she has dealt with take the time and have the patience like Officer Watrous. The DCFD worker also stated that when she was initially called by Officer Watrous, he had all the information for her and explained the situation in great detail. Officer Watrous should be commended for his dedication to treating every citizen with compassion, empathy, and respect.

## VEHICLE THEFT & BURGLARY PREVENTION TIPS

FACT: A car is stolen approximately every 25 seconds somewhere in the U.S.

FACT: Most of these thefts are preventable!

Some criminals can take your car in less than 30 seconds. You can use an anti-theft device to include hidden secondary ignition switches or steering wheel locks. Most of those devices cost less than the insurance deductible paid out if their car is stolen and there are discounts offered for using them.

- Park in well-lighted areas.
- REPORT ANY SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES TO UPD!
- Close all windows, lock all doors, and take the vehicle keys with you. 25% of stolen vehicles had the keys in the most. Most with the engine running!
- Do not leave anything of value in plain view. IF IT CAN BE SEEN IT CAN BE STOLEN!
- Never hide a second set of keys anywhere on or near your car.
- Never leave your car running. Even if you'll only be gone for a minute.
- Don't think driving an older car is less appealing to thieves.

## BURGLARY PREVENTION

Stop Home & Business Burglaries - Don't Tempt a Thief!



- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if it is for a short period of time, lock your doors and windows.
- REPORT ANY SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES TO Unified Police Department @ (801) 743-7000
- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps with automatic timers to turn on in the evening and off during the day. Also you can notify the Unified Police Department / Taylorsville Precinct to request a property check while you are away. (385-468-9435)
- Keep your garage door closed and locked at all times!
- Do not leave lawn mowers or other easily stolen yard items in plain view
- Push button locks on doorknobs to exterior doors are easy for burglars to open. Replace them with deadbolt locks.
- Secure vacant rental or foreclosure properties from air conditioning and copper thefts by using a padlock and chain security device or by caging in the unit so thieves cannot reach the valuable metal.
- Do not allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers, or flyers build up while you are away. Arrange with the United States Postal Service to hold your mail or arrange for a friend or neighbor to pick them up regularly. (<https://holdmail.usps.com>)
- Arrange for your lawn to be mowed or your snow to be removed by a trusted individual while you are gone for an extended period of time.
- Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them if necessary.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security. Check with your local home improvement store for assistance.